

Negative Pension Input Amount (PIA)

Information leaflet



You need to read this leaflet if your PCSPS(NI) Scheme pension savings statement for the relevant tax year 2023/24 (or a subsequent tax year) shows that you have a negative pension input amount. It should be read together with “A guide to your Pension Savings Statement” Guide available on our website at:

www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/pension-savings-statements

This leaflet will update you of the government’s changes to the calculation of the pension input amount of annual allowance. It will also help you to calculate your total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount if you have a negative pension input amount, so that you can determine whether you have an annual allowance tax charge to pay.

Check if you have a negative pension input amount

A negative pension input amount in the PCSPS(NI) Scheme will be displayed as a minus amount. This could be in the current tax year or in the previous three tax years.

Why do I have a negative pension input amount

A negative Pension Input Amount (PIA) does not normally mean that your pension benefits have reduced. In most cases, it indicates that the growth in your pension during the tax year was lower than the inflation-adjusted increase applied to your opening pension value. This can occur in years when the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) is particularly high, such as 10.1% for 2023/24 and 6.7% for 2024/25.

HMRC changes for public service pension schemes from 2023/24

The government announced a change to the calculation of the pension input amount for public service pension scheme members in the Spring Budget 2023 and this was introduced in the Finance Act 2004 (Registered Pension Schemes and Annual Allowance Charge) Order (SI 2024/357).

From tax year 2023/24, if your pension input amount in the PCSPS(NI) Scheme is calculated to be a negative amount, you are allowed to offset this against a positive pension input amount in the alpha Scheme in the same tax year.

Before the changes, the PCSPS(NI) Scheme pension input amount would have automatically been treated as zero, and this remains the situation for tax years before 2023/24. The change to the PCSPS(NI) Scheme could result in you having more annual allowance headroom overall and reduce the potential of an annual allowance charge.

The change does not affect the alpha Scheme. Therefore, a pension input amount is shown as either zero, or a positive amount in the alpha Scheme pension input amount.

No changes for non-public service pension schemes

If you have other pension benefit growth, there is no change to the calculation of a pension input amount in a non-public service pension scheme. Your pension input amount will be shown as either zero, or a positive amount.

You are also not allowed to offset a PCSPS(NI) Scheme negative pension input amount against a positive pension input amount in another registered pension scheme. This includes the NICS additional voluntary contributions (AVC) Scheme, or another public service pension scheme.

Calculating your ‘total NICS Pension Scheme input amount’ in a relevant tax year

As a member of both the PCSPS(NI) Scheme and the alpha Scheme you will receive two pension savings statements. Each pension savings statement will show your pension input amount in the relevant tax year and the three previous tax years in that NICS Pension Scheme. Your ‘total NICS Pension Scheme input amount’ in each tax year is your PCSPS(NI) Scheme pension input amount added to your alpha Scheme pension input amount.

You will need to calculate your total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount for the relevant tax year from the information provided in both statements.

Example 1

A member receives the following pension input amounts in the pension savings statements.

Your PCSPS(NI) Pension Scheme Annual Allowance Pension Savings Statement

Pension Scheme Tax Reference (PSTR) 00329686RF

Relevant Tax Year

Your Pension input amount in the relevant tax year is:

Pension Input Period Start	Pension Input Period End	Standard Annual Allowance (across all of your pension schemes)	Pension Input Amount (Growth) in the PCSPS(NI) Pension Scheme
06/04/ --	05/04/--	£60,000.00	£-20,000.00

Your alpha Pension Scheme Annual Allowance Pension Savings Statement

Pension Scheme Tax Reference (PSTR) 00820865RA

Relevant Tax Year

Your Pension input amount in the relevant tax year is:

Pension Input Period Start	Pension Input Period End	Standard Annual Allowance (across all of your pension schemes)	Pension Input Amount (Growth) in the alpha Pension Scheme
06/04/--	05/04/--	£60,000.00	£65,000.00

The total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount is £65,000 + (-£20,000) = £45,000

If the member's available annual allowance is £60,000 the total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount of £45,000 is less than this amount. The amount is then added to any pension input amount in another registered pension scheme. This is the total pension input amount.

Example 2

In this example, the PCSPS(NI) Pension Scheme pension input amount is £-10,000, and the alpha Pension Scheme input amount is £85,000.

Your PCSPS(NI) Pension Scheme Annual Allowance Pension Savings Statement

Pension Scheme Tax Reference (PSTR) 00329686RF

Relevant Tax Year

Your Pension input amount in the relevant tax year is:

Pension Input Period Start	Pension Input Period End	Standard Annual Allowance (across all of your pension schemes)	Pension Input Amount (Growth) in the PCSPS(NI) Pension Scheme
06/04/--	05/04/--	£60,000.00	£-10,000.00

Your alpha Pension Scheme Annual Allowance Pension Savings Statement

Pension Scheme Tax Reference (PSTR) 00820865RA

Relevant Tax Year

Your Pension input amount in the relevant tax year is:

Pension Input Period Start	Pension Input Period End	Standard Annual Allowance (across all of your pension schemes)	Pension Input Amount (Growth) in the alpha Pension Scheme
06/04/--	05/04/--	£60,000.00	£85,000.00

The total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount is £85,000 + (£-10,000) = £75,000

As the member's available annual allowance is £60,000 the total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount is more than this amount, therefore the member could potentially have a tax charge to pay. The amount is then added to any pension input amount in another registered pension scheme. This is the total pension input amount; this should be reviewed against any 'carry forward'.

Calculating your total NICS Pension Scheme input amount in a carry forward tax year

Any annual allowance you have not used in the previous three tax years can be added to your annual allowance in the relevant tax year. This is 'carry forward'. Carry forward gives you a higher available annual allowance to use against the relevant tax year's total pension input amount, which reduces your potential for having an annual allowance charge.

If you've received a pension savings statement for a relevant tax year after 2023/24, and one or more of your previous three tax years includes a tax year from 2023/24 onwards, you'll need to calculate your total NICS Pension Scheme input amount for each tax year, including where you have a negative PCSPS(NI) Scheme pension input amount. You will be able to do this using the information provided in the pension savings statements.

You can only offset a negative PCSPS(NI) Scheme pension input amount against a positive alpha Scheme pension input amount in the same tax year (from 2023/24). It is not possible to offset a negative PCSPS(NI) Scheme pension input amount in one tax year against a positive alpha Scheme pension input amount in a later tax year. See sample Pension Savings Statement below for illustration purposes:

Principal Civil Service Pension Schemes (Northern Ireland), PCSPS(NI)	
For HMRC purposes the Pension Scheme Tax Reference (PSTR) for PCSPS(NI) is 00329686RF	
Pension Input Amount in the period 6 April 2025 to 5 April 2026:	£55,000

Your PCSPS(NI) pension input amounts for the previous 3 years			
Tax year	Pension Input Period	Standard Annual Allowance	Pension Input Amount
Tax year 1 - 2022/23	06/04/2022 – 05/04/2023	£40,000	£56,000
Tax Year 2 - 2023/24	06/04/2023 – 05/04/2024	£60,000	£-35,000
Tax Year 3 - 2024/25	06/04/2024 – 05/04/2025	£60,000	£3,000

alpha pension scheme	
For HMRC purposes the Pension Scheme Tax Reference (PSTR) for alpha (NI) is 00820865RA	
Pension Input Amount in the period 6 April 2025 to 5 April 2026:	£35,000

Your alpha pension input amounts for the previous 3 years			
Tax year	Pension Input Period	Standard Annual Allowance	Pension Input Amount
Tax year 1 - 2022/23	06/04/2022 – 05/04/2023	£40,000	£30,000
Tax Year 2 - 2023/24	06/04/2023 – 05/04/2024	£60,000	£30,000
Tax Year 3 - 2024/25	06/04/2024 – 05/04/2025	£60,000	£29,000

For tax year 2023/24, the negative PCSPS(NI) pension input amount can be offset against the alpha pension input amount. Therefore, the total NICS pension input amounts would be:

Your total NICS pension input amounts for the previous 3 years			
Tax year	Pension Input Period	Standard Annual Allowance	Pension Input Amount
Tax year 1 - 2022/23	06/04/2022 – 05/04/2023	£40,000	£86,000
Tax Year 2 - 2023/24	06/04/2023 – 05/04/2024	£60,000	£0
Tax Year 3 - 2024/25	06/04/2024 – 05/04/2025	£60,000	£32,000

Although £-35,000 plus £30,000 gives £-5,000, this negative figure becomes zero.

HMRC does not permit the carry forward of any unused negative pension input amount. The maximum amount of unused annual allowance that can be carried forward is the standard annual allowance for the tax year, unless you are subject to a lower annual allowance (for example, the tapered annual allowance).

More information about the annual allowance, carry forward and the tapered annual allowance can be found in the 'Pension Savings Statements' section of our website at:

www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/pension-savings-statements

Calculating your 'total pension input amount' in a relevant tax year

Your total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount is then added to any pension input amount you may have in another pension scheme or arrangement, this will be your 'total pension input amount'. Your total pension input amount is then tested against your available annual allowance for that tax year.

In examples 1 and 2 there is the potential for an annual allowance charge if the total pension input amount (total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount, added to any other registered pension scheme's pension input amount) is more than your available annual allowance, unless the member has enough unused annual allowance from the previous three tax years to carry forward.

HMRC's Annual Allowance calculator

You can use HMRC's annual allowance calculator to check whether you have an annual allowance charge. You can find HMRC's calculator at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-have-unused-annual-allowances-on-your-pension-savings

If you have a negative pension input amount in the PCSPS(NI) Scheme you will need to calculate your total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount for this tax year. You can do this by adding your negative PCSPS(NI) Scheme pension input amount to your alpha Scheme pension input amount.

You will then need to enter your total pension input amount (total NICS Pension Scheme pension input amount, added to any other registered pension scheme's pension input amount) into the calculator and the calculator result screen will then show you any excess pension input amount on which tax is due.

This leaflet is published by Civil Service Pensions (NI)

Issue 1

October 2026